

# The University of Rhode Island

Robert L. Carothers, Ph.D., President

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## Diversity Climate Assessment Spring 2004

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July 2004



### SQOLAS

Student Quality of Life and Satisfaction

The Division of Student Affairs  
University of Rhode Island  
Kingston, Rhode Island  
02881

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## Executive Summary

The Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 is the second installment of URI's student-centered evaluation of the campus climate towards diversity. For this assessment, a total of 515 URI students (59% female, mean age: 21.5, 62.5% living on campus) were recruited via phone. Minority students were intentionally over-sampled (41.7% minority students).

Based on a previously published and nationally validated questionnaire (Landrum et al., 2000), respondents were asked to respond to 43 multiple-choice items and 2 open-ended questions. The multiple-choice items spanned a breadth of diversity-related attitudes, ranging from the assessment of the respondents' own sense of value of diversity to their perception of the sensitivity of the campus towards issues of diversity. It was found that, generally speaking, participants agreed that diversity has an inherently positive value, and that this university provides a good environment for diversity. Additionally, several themes emerged in regards to race, class standing, and gender:

Race: Majority students felt more strongly that this campus succeeds in creating a diversity-friendly environment, while minority students advocated the infusion of multicultural topics into the curriculum more strongly than majority students.

Class standing: Students of lower class standing expressed a more positive appraisal of the university's striving to create a diversity-friendly environment than students of higher class standing. The trend observed in 2001 that students of higher class standing perceived a greater educational value in diversity than students of lower class standing was not replicated in 2004.

Gender: Female students indicated a greater appreciation of the value of diversity in general (i.e., in promoting personal growth and a healthy society; in promoting communities and the workplace), as well as in particular in terms of its educational value.

To track the development of URI student attitudes toward diversity over time, a comparison between then data obtained in 2001 and 2004 was conducted. Generally speaking, 2004 participants indicated valuing diversity itself more than 2001 participants by endorsing more strongly that diversity enriches the educational experience, strengthens communities and the workplace, enhances America's economic competitiveness, and that diversity on campus improves the quality of their education. They also expressed a more positive appraisal of the adequacy of this campus regarding diversity issues by agreeing more readily than 2001 participants that the campus environment is free from racial conflict and that it promotes diversity, and that the faculty, staff and administration are sensitive to diversity issues, and exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus. This positive trend was more pronounced among majority students than minority students. When compared to national data of the year 2000, this positive trend held, and was particularly

pronounced in regards to the perceived educational value of diversity. Here, the URI 2004 respondents agreed more commonly than the 2000 respondents of the national survey (Landrum et al., 2000) that diversity on campus improves the quality of education (76.8% URI 2004 agreement vs. 58.8% national 2000 agreement), the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity (60.6% vs. 46.9%), and that diversity enriches the educational experience (90.7% vs. 79.0%).

The open-ended items asked respondents to identify advantages and disadvantages of diversity. In regards to the advantages of diversity, 2004 participants most commonly cited its educational and well-rounding effect (25.4%), followed by its role in assuaging differences (18.1%). In regards to the disadvantages of diversity, participants most commonly indicated that there are no disadvantages to diversity (45.4%). About a fifth of the respondents identified some negative consequences of diversity (20.6%), chiefly among which they cited the increased potential for conflict and tension (8.3%) brought about by diversity, and the discomfort experienced by some (5.6%) due to diversity. Another fifth indicated some negative associations of diversity (18.8%), where respondents indicated that discrimination (4.1%) and 'ignorant people' (4.1%) are the primary problems in regards to diversity.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Purpose**

In 2001, the Division of Student Affairs of the University of Rhode Island conducted a pilot study to establish a baseline assessment of the URI campus climate in regards to multicultural issues. This pilot study, known as the Diversity Climate Assessment 2001 (Hoeppner, Dougan & Campbell, 2001), was part of the university's larger initiative to become increasingly aware of and competent in issues and matters regarding multiculturalism (URI Resolution Agreement, 2000). The goals of this initiative include specifically the assessment of the current climate in regards to multicultural issues on campus, improvement of the community environment, and the inclusion of multicultural issues in the curriculum. The Diversity Climate Assessment 2001 was the first campus-wide assessment that addressed these issues from the point of view of the student body. The Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 is the second of these assessments.

The purpose of the Diversity Climate Assessment 2001 was to establish a baseline appraisal of the current campus climate towards diversity. Special attention was paid to identifying differing attitudes and experiences towards diversity according to students' race, gender, and class standing. In general, the greatest differences between student views and experiences were found in regards to students' race, where minority students expressed less positive views of the current campus climate than majority students. For example, minority students were less likely than majority students to agree that the university actively promotes diversity, the campus is free of racial conflict, the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one, that friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race, or that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus. They were more likely to agree that they had encountered racial discrimination on campus, the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity, that they were comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition or the sexual orientation of those who attend, or that as far as they knew, minorities feel uncomfortable at this university.

The differences found in the 2001 assessment according to students' class standing and gender were fewer. In regards to class standing, students of higher class standing perceived a greater educational value in diversity (e.g., were more likely to agree that diversity enriches the educational experience and that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity) than students of lower class standing and expressed a greater comfort in attending campus activities regardless of the racial composition of those who attend. Students of higher class standing also expressed less favorable views of the campus climate towards gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender

persons (e.g., were more likely to agree that they had encountered discrimination against persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation on this campus, and were less likely to agree that students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation).

In regards to gender, female students tended to express a greater belief in the value of diversity (e.g., that diversity enhances America, and strengthens communities and the workplace) than male students, and were less likely to agree that persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university.

In addition to focusing on identifying these differences within the URI student body, an effort was made in 2001 to compare the URI student responses to the responses of a broader sample. The study conducted by Landrum, Dillinger and Vandernoot (2000) provided a suitable national comparison group, consisting of a total of 2,383 student participants recruited at 11 US universities. It was found that URI student responses toward diversity issues were largely similar to student responses of this comparison group (Hoepfner et al., 2001). Furthermore, URI student responses compared favorably in regards to students' awareness of the university diversity plan, the perceived educational value of diversity, students' satisfaction with faculty and staff sensitivity towards issues of diversity and students' personal comfort with diversity.

The Diversity Climate Assessment 2001 was an informative, small-scale, pilot study with the goal of bench-marking and describing URI's diversity campus climate. The 2004 study, presented in this report, is a larger scale follow-up investigation. For the 2004 study, the sample size was drastically increased (from 148 participants to 515 participants) and the recruitment of minority students improved (from 27.7% to 41.7%). The goals for the study remained the same as in the 2001 study, with one important addition: to assess the existence of potential changes in students' attitudes towards the diversity campus climate from 2001 to 2004.

In accordance with these goals, the present report will focus on three main themes: (1) identifying differences within the 2004 data according to students' race, gender, and class standing; and (2) comparing student attitudes towards the diversity campus climate between the 2001 and 2004 assessments; (3) providing a rough comparison of the 2004 data and the national comparison group used in the 2001 report. The third main comparison of this report is unfortunately limited to a very rough comparison of URI data to national data. The reason for this unfortunately limited comparison is the fact that the work conducted by Landrum et al. (2000) remains the most recently published work utilizing the assessment tool of the Diversity Climate Assessments.

## **1.2. Recruitment of Participants**

To obtain a representative sample of the URI student body, a random sampling approach was chosen. Since the purpose of the assessment was to assess the campus climate towards issues of diversity, it was judged to be of critical importance to have an adequate representation of both majority and minority students. Consequently, the randomization of potential participants occurred within these designated racial groups.

The Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 was administered via phone during March of 2004. The home phone numbers of all currently enrolled URI students were obtained from the URI Office of Enrollment Services alongside with the students' self-reported racial background. The researchers then divided these phone numbers into two lists: one list of phone numbers of majority (i.e., white) students, and one list of phone numbers of minority students. Both lists were randomized, and all identifying information removed. Then these two lists were given to the Survey Center of the URI Cancer Prevention Research Center, which was hired to conduct the phone survey on behalf of the Division of Student Affairs. The Survey Center was instructed to complete 250 phone-interviews per list, resulting in a planned sample size of 500. The actually obtained sample size was 515, and was not equally split between majority and minority students, due to the fact that some phone interviews resulting from the list of minority students' phone numbers were actually completed by majority students and vice versa. Specifically, 57 interviews with majority students resulted from using the list of minority student phone numbers, and 19 interviews with minority students resulted from using the list of majority students. The final sample consisted of 214 minority students and 299 majority students. Two participants chose not to specify their racial background.

## **1.3. Instrument Used**

The instruments used for the Campus Diversity Assessments 2001 and 2004 were identical, with the exception that the 2004 assessment included 3 more demographic items (i.e., regarding student status, work commitment, and residence) than the 2001 assessment. Specifically, the Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 consisted of a total of 43 multiple-choice items, and 2 open-ended questions. Of the 43 multiple-choice items, 9 were demographic items. The remaining 34 items were an adapted version of the Campus Diversity Questionnaire-Revised (CDQ-R: Landrum, Dillinger, & Vandernoot, 2000). The CDQ-R is a multicultural diversity climate assessment tool



consisting of 23 Likert-type scale agreement-disagreement statements that was developed using a sample of 2,383 students at 11 universities of the United States. As the CDQ-R consists exclusively of positively worded statements, 6 items (items 4, 5, 9, 13, 15, and 21) were reworded negatively (e.g., by inserting the word “not”) in the Diversity Climate Assessment 2001 to avoid a response set. Also, for the 2001 assessment, a total of 11 items were added to this measure to specifically address issues regarding disability (items 24 – 29) and sexual orientation (items 30 – 34). The additional items were created by utilizing the same sentence structures as in previous items of the CDQ-R, with only minor changes to the wording to focus on issues regarding disability and sexual orientation, respectively.

For the two open-ended questions, participants were asked what the benefits or advantages to diversity are, and what the drawbacks or disadvantages are.

## 2. General Description of the Sample

### 2.1. Racial Background

For the Diversity Climate Assessment 2004, minority students were intentionally over-sampled. Thus, the resulting racial distribution of the obtained sample, summarized in Table 1, is not representative of the URI student body.

*Table 1.* Participants’ racial background by gender.

Racial Background	Gender			
	Female		Male	
	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	0.3	2	1.0
Black/African American	30	9.9	26	12.4
Hispanic/Latino	41	13.5	28	13.3
White/Caucasian	183	60.4	116	55.2
Asian American/Pacific Islander	27	8.9	24	11.4
Other	21	6.9	14	6.7
<i>Total</i>	303	100.00	210	100.00

As can be seen in Table 1, the racial distribution of the sample according to gender is very similar. In general, the final sample consisted of more female students ( $n = 303$ ) than male students ( $n = 210$ ), which is not uncommon for phone recruitments. Furthermore, a higher percentage of female minority students was recruited than of male minority students. Two participants did not

specify their racial background. A total of 35 students described their racial background as “other”. Of these, 9 participants described themselves as Cape Verdean, 4 as African American/White, 2 as Caucasian/Hispanic, 1 as Native American/Black, 3 as unspecified bi/multi-racial, 1 each as American, Celtic, Greek Orthodox, Haitian, Indian, Italian, Jamaican, Jewish, Spanish, and ‘Human’, and 6 did not want to further specify.

## 2.2. Religious Background

To determine the participants’ racial background, participants were asked to describe themselves in terms of *a priori* determined racial categories. No such *a priori* groupings were defined regarding participants’ religion. Instead, participants were asked to name their religion, if any. In Table 2, the participants’ responses are summarized through the use of broad terms for the most commonly named religion or category of religious background.

Table 2 . Religions of the Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 participants by racial background.

Religion	Racial Background				Total	
	Minority		Non-minority			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Catholic	67	31.9	136	45.8	203	40.0
Christian - but not Catholic	30	14.3	36	12.1	66	13.0
Christian	41	19.5	32	10.8	73	14.4
Eastern (e.g. Buddhist, Hindu)	17	8.1	1	0.3	18	3.6
Jewish	1	0.5	16	5.4	17	3.4
Other	1 <sup>1</sup>	0.5	1 <sup>2</sup>	0.3	2	0.4
Non-religious	46	21.9	60	20.2	106	20.9
Atheistic or agnostic	3	1.4	14	4.7	17	3.4
Refused	4	1.9	1	0.3	5	1.0
Total	210	100.0	297	100.0	507	100.0

In Table 2 it can be seen that the religious background of the participants differed somewhat between minority and majority students. Both majority and minority students most commonly described themselves as Catholic, but minority students tended to do so less frequently. Instead, minority students tended to describe themselves more globally as ‘Christian’ than majority students.

The percentage of participants describing themselves as non-religious was substantial (20.9%) for both minority and majority students, without including individuals describing

<sup>1</sup> Ancient Greek Polytheist

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah’s Witness

themselves as atheistic or agnostic (3.4%). Not surprisingly, more minority than majority students named non-Christian religions as their own.

### 2.3. Disability Status

A total of 21 participants (4.1%) described themselves as having a disability. This percentage was roughly equal for female (4.3%) and male students (3.8%). Described disabilities included most commonly learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia), but also spanned a variety of psychological (e.g., anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder) and physiological (e.g., bladder disease, scarring, wheelchair dependency) illnesses and disabilities. One participant identified his/her disability as being of a minority.

### 2.4. Sexual Orientation

A total of 5 participants (1.0%) (3 male) described themselves as homosexual, and a total of 11 participants (2.1%) (8 female) described themselves as bisexual or transgender. Majority and minority students identified themselves as homosexual equally frequently. A higher percentage of majority students than minority students described themselves as bisexual or transgender (3.0% vs. 0.9%).

### 2.5. Class Standing

Participants' class standings are summarized in Table 3 in regards to gender. Participants identified themselves most commonly as being of freshman class standing (38.1%), and the final sample consisted predominantly of students of lower class standing (64.5%). The number of participants declined with increasing class standing. No meaningful differences were observed in class standings between female and male students.

*Table 3.* Class standing of Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 participants according to gender.

Class Standing	Gender				Total	
	female		male			
	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
freshman	116	38.2	80	37.9	196	38.1
sophomore	79	26.0	57	27.0	136	26.4
junior	51	16.8	40	19.0	91	17.7
senior	52	17.1	27	12.8	79	15.3
grad student	6	2.0	7	3.3	13	2.5
<i>Total</i>	304	100.0	211	100.0	515	100.0



## 2.6. Employment

It was mentioned previously that three demographic items were added to the instrument used for the 2004 Diversity Climate Assessment. Two of these three added items are summarized in Table 4, which presents the mean number of hours worked per week according to gender and enrollment status.

*Table 4.* Employment commitment and student status of Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 participants.

Gender	Enrollment Status	Number of hours worked per week		N
		Mean	Std. Deviation	
female	full-time student	9.4	10.4	276
	part-time student	26.1	17.7	23
	<i>Total</i>	10.7	11.9	299
male	full-time student	9.3	10.5	191
	part-time student	24.6	18.5	16
	<i>Total</i>	10.5	12.0	207
<i>Total</i>	full-time student	9.4	10.4	467
	part-time student	25.5	17.8	39
	<i>Total</i>	10.6	11.9	506

As can be seen in Table 4, female part-time students on average reported working the most number of hours per week (mean = 26.1, SD = 17.7), and male full-time students on average reported working the least number of hours per week (mean = 9.3, SD = 10.5). In general, part-time students reported more work-hours per week than full-time students. No statistically significant difference was found in the average number of work hours reported by female and male students.

## 2.7. Living Arrangements

A total of 322 participants (62.5%) reported living on campus. The percentages of female and male students living on campus were roughly the same. Furthermore, no statistically significant difference was found according to the participants' race.

### 3. Description of the 2004 Results

#### 3.1. General Overview

The diversity climate assessment tool spanned a total of 34 items. 23 of the 34 items were taken directly from the CDQ-R (Landrum et al., 2000), with slight rewordings on six items (i.e., items 4, 5, 9, 13, 15, and 21), as explained in section 1.3. The remaining 11 items were added items to address disability and sexual orientation issues. All 34 items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral/uncertain, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

Tables 5 – 7 summarize the responses of the participants of the Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 to these 34 items. In these tables, the items, the average responses of the 2004 participants, and the standard deviations per average are given. The items are sorted in order of descending strength of agreement. Thus, items that the respondents agreed with most strongly are listed first, and items that participants disagreed with most strongly are listed last. The numerical value per item can be interpreted by using the Likert scale outlined above. That is, an average response of above 3 reflects agreement with a statement, and an average response below 3 reflects disagreement with a statement.

Table 5 summarizes the URI student responses to the ‘original’ CDQ-R (Landrum et al., 2000) items. Of these 23 items, URI students agreed with 16 items, and disagreed with 7 items. Generally speaking, participants agreed that diversity has an inherently positive value (e.g., it strengthens communities and the workplace, enriches educational experience), and that this university provides a good environment for diversity (e.g., the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one; faculty, staff, and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus). The average participant had not encountered racial discrimination on this campus, and did not believe that minorities feel uncomfortable at this university. Generally, participants agreed most strongly with statements enumerating the advantages of diversity, and disagreed most strongly with statements that negated the value of diversity. Participants were not, however, aware of the university’s diversity plan.

Tables 6 and 7 summarize the 2004 participants’ responses to the items regarding disability and sexual orientation issues. Participants agreed with all statements reflecting a positive assessment of this campus towards disability and sexual orientation issues. Furthermore, they disagreed that they had encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities or against persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation on this campus.

Table 5. URI 2004 student responses to the ‘original’ CDQ-R items.

<b>‘Original’ CDQ-R Items</b>		<b>URI 2004 (<i>n</i> = 515)</b>	
<i>No.</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
22.	Diversity strengthens communities and the workplace.	4.26	0.66
20.	Diversity enriches the educational experience.	4.18	0.72
23.	Diversity enhances America	3.97	0.82
17.	Diversity on campus improves the quality of my education.	3.91	0.85
18.	I am satisfied with my educational institution.	3.87	0.88
6.	In general, the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one.	3.82	0.77
3.	This university actively promotes diversity.	3.81	0.91
2.	Friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race.	3.79	0.95
14.	I feel comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition of those who attend.	3.79	1.07
7.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus.	3.76	0.87
19.	The faculty at this institution is sensitive to diversity issues.	3.67	0.78
16.	Where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom.	3.54	0.88
12.	I think that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity.	3.5	1.07
10.	Recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority.	3.31	0.94
1.	The campus environment is free from racial conflict.	3.29	1
15.	Hiring practices at this university do not indicate that racial/ethnic barriers are gradually eroding.	3.11	0.74
8.	I am aware of the content of my university	2.85	1.11
13.	This university does not provide a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity.	2.77	0.94
5.	My education on this campus has not included exposure to the history and culture of minority groups.	2.7	1.14
4.	As far as I know, minorities feel uncomfortable at this university.	2.5	0.96
11.	I have encountered racial discrimination on this campus.	2.36	1.24
9.	Taking classes that emphasize multicultural diversity would not enhance my education.	2.09	0.95
21.	Diversity does not promote personal growth and a healthy society.	1.77	0.77

Table 6. URI 2004 student responses to the items regarding disability issues.

Items regarding Disability Issues		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 515)	
<i>No.</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
25.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with disabilities.	4.33	0.66
26.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.75	0.82
27.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.5	0.84
29.	As far as I know, persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university.	3.49	0.74
24.	In general, buildings on this campus are accessible to individuals with disabilities.	3.25	1.02
28.	I have encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities on this campus.	2.18	0.96

Table 7. URI 2004 student responses to the items regarding sexual orientation issues.

Items regarding Sexual Orientation Issues		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 515)	
<i>No.</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
30.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend.	4.23	0.72
31.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.6	0.77
34.	As far as I know, persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation feel comfortable at this university.	3.37	0.77
32.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.16	0.9
33.	I have encountered discrimination against persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation on this campus.	2.69	1.14



### 3.2. Differences According to Race

In 2001, the greatest differences between student attitudes and experiences towards diversity were found in regards to students' race. Specifically, minority students expressed less positive views of the current campus climate towards diversity than majority students. Tables 8 – 10 compare the responses of majority and minority participants of the 2004 assessment. Items are ordered in ascending order of the *p*-value; that is, items, to which minority and majority students responded most differently (i.e., with a *p*-value less than 0.05) are listed first, and items on which their responses were essentially the same (i.e., *p*-value greater than 0.05) are listed last.

In Table 8 it can be seen that minority and majority students had observably different responses to 14 of the 23 'original' CDQ-R (Landrum et al., 2000) items. These differences, however, are limited to the strength of participants' agreement or disagreement with a certain statement, and do not include actual disagreements of opinions<sup>3</sup>. That is, minority participants did not agree with one statement that majority students disagreed with, or vice versa. For instance, in regards to the adequacy of this campus in creating a diversity-friendly environment, both minority and majority students agreed that this university actively promotes diversity, and that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus and are sensitive to diversity issues. Majority students, however, expressed a significantly greater agreement with such statements than minority students. Likewise, regarding friendships, both minority and majority students expressed that the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one, and that friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race. Again, majority students expressed this view more strongly. Regarding discrimination and the comfortableness of minorities, majority students expressed more strongly than minority students that they had not encountered racial discrimination on this campus, and that they did not believe that minorities feel uncomfortable at this university. Regarding the curriculum, minority students expressed more strongly than majority students that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity, and were less convinced that professors address multicultural issues in the classroom where appropriate. Hardly any differences were observable in terms of the intrinsic value minority and majority students ascribed to diversity. Both groups agreed equally strongly that diversity enhances the educational experience, strengthens communities and the workplace, etc. The exception was in regards to the value of diversity in enhancing America's economic competitiveness, which minority students perceived more strongly than majority students.

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<sup>3</sup> The only slight exception occurred regarding the item on the adequacy of the new student orientation in addressing multicultural diversity (#13); majority students disagreed that this student orientation was inadequate, while minority students expressed uncertainty towards this statement.

In sum, minority and majority students on average agreed on the veracity or falsity of each of the 'original' 23 CDQ-R items, as they pertained to URI. They differed in the intensity of their agreement or disagreement to 14 of the 23 items. Specifically, majority students felt more strongly that this campus succeeds in creating a diversity-friendly environment, and minority students advocated the infusion of multicultural topics into the curriculum more strongly than majority students.

Tables 9 and 10 summarize the responses of minority and majority students towards disability and sexual orientation issues. Minority and majority students did not, per se, disagree on any of the 6 disability or the 5 sexual orientation items. Majority students did, however, express a stronger opinion towards 3 of the 6 disability items, and 2 of the sexual orientation items. Specifically, majority students expressed a more positive appraisal of the sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus displayed by faculty, staff, administration, and students, and were more convinced than minority students that persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university. Similarly, in regards to sexual orientation, majority students expressed more strongly than minority students that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation, and that persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation feel comfortable at this university.

Table 8. URI student responses to CDQ-R items, minority vs. majority students, 2004.

Original CDQ-R Items		Minority ( <i>n</i> = 214)		Majority ( <i>n</i> = 299)		Sig.
1.	The campus environment is free from racial conflict.	3.05	1.07	3.47	0.91	<.000
3.	This university actively promotes diversity.	3.57	1	3.98	0.79	<.000
4.	As far as I know, minorities feel uncomfortable at this university.	2.72	1.09	2.34	0.82	<.000
6.	In general, the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one.	3.6	0.88	3.97	0.63	<.000
7.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus.	3.47	0.94	3.98	0.73	<.000
11.	I have encountered racial discrimination on this campus.	2.7	1.33	2.12	1.12	<.000
12.	I think that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity.	3.84	0.94	3.25	1.1	<.000
13.	This university does not provide a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity.	3.01	1.02	2.58	0.83	<.000
14.	I feel comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition of those who attend.	3.57	1.17	3.96	0.97	<.000
16.	Where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom.	3.29	0.94	3.73	0.77	<.000
18.	I am satisfied with my educational institution.	3.64	1	4.04	0.73	<.000
19.	The faculty at this institution is sensitive to diversity issues.	3.4	0.9	3.88	0.59	<.000
2.	Friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race.	3.63	1.01	3.92	0.88	0.001
23.	Diversity enhances America's economic competitiveness.	4.08	0.83	3.89	0.8	0.008
5.	My education on this campus has not included exposure to the history and culture of minority groups.	2.8	1.13	2.62	1.14	0.079
9.	Taking classes that emphasize multicultural diversity would not enhance my education.	2.16	0.99	2.04	0.93	0.149
10.	Recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority.	3.38	1.01	3.26	0.88	0.164
20.	Diversity enriches the educational experience.	4.23	0.68	4.14	0.74	0.170
22.	Diversity strengthens communities and the workplace.	4.3	0.7	4.22	0.62	0.175
21.	Diversity does not promote personal growth and a healthy society.	1.82	0.84	1.74	0.72	0.275
8.	I am aware of the content of my university's diversity plan.	2.79	1.09	2.9	1.12	0.283
17.	Diversity on campus improves the quality of my education.	3.96	0.88	3.89	0.82	0.345
15.	Hiring practices at this university do not indicate that racial/ethnic barriers are gradually eroding.	3.11	0.68	3.12	0.78	0.846

Table 9. URI student responses to items regarding disability issues, minority vs. majority students, 2004.

Items regarding Disability Issues		Minority (n = 214)		Majority (n = 299)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	Mean	SD	p
26.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.56	0.86	3.89	0.77	<.000
29.	As far as I know, persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university.	3.34	0.78	3.6	0.7	<.000
27.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.38	0.89	3.6	0.79	0.003
24.	In general, buildings on this campus are accessible to individuals with disabilities.	3.21	1.05	3.28	1	0.472
28.	I have encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities on this campus.	2.21	0.97	2.16	0.96	0.569
25.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with disabilities.	4.32	0.71	4.34	0.62	0.736

Table 10. URI student responses to items regarding sexual orientation issues, minority vs. majority students, 2004.

Items regarding Sexual Orientation Issues		Minority (n = 214)		Majority (n = 299)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	Mean	SD	p
31.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.46	0.74	3.7	0.78	<.000
34.	As far as I know, persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation feel comfortable at this university.	3.23	0.8	3.47	0.74	0.001
33.	I have encountered discrimination against persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation on this campus.	2.59	1.08	2.75	1.17	0.115
30.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend.	4.18	0.76	4.28	0.68	0.146
32.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.15	0.89	3.17	0.91	0.770

### 3.3. Differences According to Class Standing

The differences found in 2001 in regards to the participants' class standing were few. In this section, the differences in opinions found in the 2004 assessment between students of lower class standing (i.e., freshmen and sophomores) and students of higher class standing (i.e., juniors and seniors)<sup>4</sup> are presented, starting with the differences found in regards to the 'original' CDQ-R (Landrum et al., 2000) items, followed by items regarding disability and sexual orientation issues.

In regards to the 'original' CDQ-R (Landrum et al., 2000) items, it was found in 2001 that students of higher class standing perceived a greater educational value in diversity than students of lower class standing and expressed a greater comfort in attending campus activities regardless of the racial composition of those who attend. The 2004 responses to the CDQ-R items are summarized in Table 11. As before, items are ordered in ascending order of the *p*-value; that is, items, to which students of lower and higher class standing responded most differently are listed first, and items on which their responses were essentially the same (i.e., *p*-value greater than 0.05) are listed last.

In Table 11 it can be seen that in 2004 students of lower and higher class standing expressed observably different opinions in response to 4 of the 23 'original' CDQ-R items. They did not disagree in their response to any of these 4 items, but differed in the strengths with which they endorsed them. Specifically, students of lower class standing agreed more strongly than students of higher class standing that the recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority and that this university actively promotes diversity. They also disagreed more strongly with the notion that URI's new student orientation does not adequately addresses multicultural diversity. Lastly, students of lower class standing were less sure as to whether or not they were aware of the university's diversity plan (students of higher class standing on average were more likely to say that they were not aware of it). In sum, students of lower class standing expressed a more positive appraisal of the university's striving to create a diversity-friendly environment than students of higher class standing. The trend observed in 2001 that students of higher class standing perceived a greater educational value in diversity than students of lower class standing was not replicated in 2004.

In regards to the added items pertaining to disability and sexual orientation issues, it was found in 2001 that students of higher class standing expressed less favorable views of the campus climate towards gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender persons than students of lower class standing. In 2004 (Tables 12 – 13), only one observably different response between students of higher and lower class standing was found. Namely, students of higher class standing were less likely to agree that persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university than students of lower class standing.

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<sup>4</sup> Graduate students (n = 13) were excluded from this comparison.

Table 11. URI student responses to CDQ-R items, undergraduate students of lower class standing vs. upper class standing, 2004.

Original CDQ-R Items		Freshmen and Sophomores ( <i>n</i> = 332)		Juniors and Seniors ( <i>n</i> = 170)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
10.	Recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority.	3.39	0.93	3.18	0.96	0.023
13.	This university does not provide a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity.	2.69	0.90	2.89	1.00	0.023
3.	This university actively promotes diversity.	3.87	0.91	3.69	0.87	0.031
8.	I am aware of the content of my university's diversity plan.	2.93	1.1	2.72	1.12	0.044
18.	I am satisfied with my educational institution.	3.91	0.85	3.77	0.93	0.086
22.	Diversity strengthens communities and the workplace.	4.29	0.61	4.19	0.71	0.090
23.	Diversity enhances America's economic competitiveness.	3.93	0.82	4.02	0.82	0.216
16.	Where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom.	3.58	0.85	3.48	0.93	0.219
14.	I feel comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition of those who attend.	3.83	1.04	3.71	1.14	0.226
4.	As far as I know, minorities feel uncomfortable at this university.	2.47	0.93	2.57	1.01	0.250
11.	I have encountered racial discrimination on this campus.	2.32	1.21	2.44	1.29	0.296
19.	The faculty at this institution is sensitive to diversity issues.	3.69	0.77	3.62	0.80	0.335
20.	Diversity enriches the educational experience.	4.2	0.67	4.14	0.79	0.343
1.	The campus environment is free from racial conflict.	3.32	0.97	3.25	1.08	0.466
5.	My education on this campus has not included exposure to the history and culture of minority groups.	2.74	1.10	2.66	1.20	0.484
17.	Diversity on campus improves the quality of my education.	3.93	0.8	3.88	0.93	0.497
15.	Hiring practices at this university do not indicate that racial/ethnic barriers are gradually eroding.	3.14	0.74	3.09	0.74	0.523
12.	I think that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity.	3.52	1.04	3.46	1.14	0.548
6.	In general, the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one.	3.83	0.76	3.79	0.80	0.571
21.	Diversity does not promote personal growth and a healthy society.	1.79	0.78	1.75	0.75	0.617
9.	Taking classes that emphasize multicultural diversity would not enhance my education.	2.09	0.91	2.05	0.99	0.672
7.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus.	3.77	0.85	3.75	0.90	0.768
2.	Friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race.	3.79	0.97	3.79	0.94	0.992

Table 12. URI student responses to items regarding disability issues, undergraduate students of lower class standing vs. upper class standing, 2004.

Items regarding Disability Issues		Freshmen and Sophomores ( <i>n</i> = 332)		Juniors and Seniors ( <i>n</i> = 170)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
29.	As far as I know, persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university.	3.55	0.71	3.39	0.76	0.023
24.	In general, buildings on this campus are accessible to individuals with disabilities.	3.3	1.02	3.17	0.98	0.169
28.	I have encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities on this campus.	2.21	0.98	2.12	0.95	0.288
26.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.74	0.79	3.78	0.88	0.618
25.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with disabilities.	4.34	0.64	4.32	0.66	0.733
27.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.5	0.86	3.49	0.82	0.853

Table 13. URI student responses to items regarding sexual orientation issues, undergraduate students of lower class standing vs. upper class standing, 2004.

Items regarding Sexual Orientation Issues		Freshmen and Sophomores ( <i>n</i> = 332)		Juniors and Seniors ( <i>n</i> = 170)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
33.	I have encountered discrimination against persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation on this campus.	2.76	1.15	2.58	1.12	0.089
30.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend.	4.25	0.69	4.18	0.77	0.256
34.	As far as I know, persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation feel comfortable at this university.	3.39	0.76	3.32	0.81	0.354
32.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.16	0.9	3.15	0.92	0.905
31.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.59	0.77	3.6	0.77	0.914

### 3.4. Differences According to Gender

In 2001, the differences in participants' responses according to gender were limited to two things: (1) female students tended to express a greater belief in the value of diversity (e.g., that diversity enhances America, and strengthens communities and the workplace) than male students, and (2) female students were less likely to agree that persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university. In 2004, the number of observed differences was somewhat higher<sup>5</sup>. Tables 14 – 16 summarize the responses given by female and male participants, starting with the differences found in regards to the 'original' CDQ-R (Landrum et al., 2000) items, and followed by items regarding disability and sexual orientation issues.

As can be seen in Table 14, female and male students expressed observably different opinions in response to 10 of the 23 'original' CDQ-R items. Compared to male students, female students indicated a greater appreciation of the value of diversity in general (i.e., in promoting personal growth and a healthy society; in promoting communities and the workplace), as well as in particular in terms of its educational value. This finding replicates the finding of 2001. In 2004, female students were also more likely than male students to agree that recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority, although they were also more likely to agree that hiring practices at this university do not indicate that racial/ethnic barriers are gradually eroding. Female students were also less convinced than male students that the campus environment is free from racial conflict, and were uncertain as to whether or not they were aware of the university's diversity plan (male students on average indicated that they were not aware of the university's diversity plan).

In regards to disability issues, female students were less convinced than male students that buildings on this campus are accessible to individuals with disabilities. No difference was observed regarding the comfort experienced by persons with disabilities on this campus, as in 2001.

In regards to sexual orientation issues, female students expressed a greater comfort in attending classes and any other campus activity regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend.

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the 2004 sample was substantially larger than the 2001 sample, and that it is possible that more differences were found due to increased statistical power rather than due to any true change in the differences in opinions between female and male students.



Table 14. URI student responses to CDQ-R items, female students vs. male students, 2004.

Original CDQ-R Items		Female ( <i>n</i> = 304)		Male ( <i>n</i> = 211)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
9.	Taking classes that emphasize multicultural diversity would not enhance my education.	1.92	0.87	2.34	1.02	0.000
12.	I think that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity.	3.70	0.97	3.22	1.16	0.000
21.	Diversity does not promote personal growth and a healthy society.	1.67	0.73	1.91	0.80	0.000
22.	Diversity strengthens communities and the workplace.	4.34	0.63	4.14	0.68	0.001
20.	Diversity enriches the educational experience.	4.25	0.69	4.08	0.75	0.007
17.	Diversity on campus improves the quality of my education.	3.98	0.80	3.81	0.91	0.023
10.	Recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority.	3.39	0.94	3.20	0.93	0.025
15.	Hiring practices at this university do not indicate that racial/ethnic barriers are gradually eroding.	3.17	0.77	3.03	0.69	0.037
8.	I am aware of the content of my university's diversity plan.	2.93	1.11	2.73	1.10	0.038
1.	The campus environment is free from racial conflict.	3.22	1.01	3.40	0.99	0.044
5.	My education on this campus has not included exposure to the history and culture of minority groups.	2.63	1.15	2.82	1.13	0.067
2.	Friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race.	3.74	0.98	3.87	0.91	0.113
6.	In general, the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one.	3.78	0.77	3.88	0.77	0.124
18.	I am satisfied with my educational institution.	3.82	0.91	3.94	0.83	0.130
23.	Diversity enhances America's economic competitiveness.	4.00	0.79	3.93	0.86	0.333
7.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus.	3.73	0.91	3.80	0.80	0.405
11.	I have encountered racial discrimination on this campus.	2.33	1.29	2.40	1.18	0.488
3.	This university actively promotes diversity.	3.82	0.92	3.79	0.88	0.704
16.	Where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom.	3.53	0.87	3.55	0.89	0.720
4.	As far as I know, minorities feel uncomfortable at this university.	2.49	0.95	2.51	0.97	0.801
19.	The faculty at this institution is sensitive to diversity issues.	3.68	0.80	3.66	0.75	0.852
14.	I feel comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition of those who attend.	3.80	1.08	3.78	1.06	0.857
13.	This university does not provide a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity.	2.77	0.95	2.76	0.92	0.892

Table 15. URI student responses to items regarding disability issues, female students vs. male students, 2004.

Items regarding Disability Issues		Female ( <i>n</i> = 304)		Male ( <i>n</i> = 211)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
24.	In general, buildings on this campus are accessible to individuals with disabilities.	3.13	1.06	3.43	0.94	0.001
29.	As far as I know, persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university.	3.45	0.73	3.55	0.76	0.137
27.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.46	0.91	3.56	0.74	0.172
25.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with disabilities.	4.37	0.65	4.29	0.66	0.205
26.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.73	0.83	3.78	0.81	0.525
28.	I have encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities on this campus.	2.18	0.97	2.18	0.95	0.926

Table 16. URI student responses to items regarding sexual orientation issues, female students vs. male students, 2004.

Items regarding Sexual Orientation Issues		Female ( <i>n</i> = 304)		Male ( <i>n</i> = 211)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
30.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend.	4.30	0.71	4.13	0.72	0.007
31.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.65	0.77	3.52	0.77	0.050
32.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.18	0.91	3.13	0.89	0.546
33.	I have encountered discrimination against persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation on this campus.	2.68	1.19	2.7	1.06	0.852
34.	As far as I know, persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation feel comfortable at this university.	3.38	0.82	3.36	0.70	0.885

## 4. Direct Comparison of the 2001 and the 2004 Results

### 4.1. Direct Overall Differences between 2001 and 2004 Results

The main purpose of the Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 was to assess whether or not there were observable differences in the attitudes and experiences of students regarding diversity issues between the years 2001 and 2004. Tables 17 – 19 summarize the responses given by participants in 2001 and 2004, starting with the differences found in regards to the ‘original’ CDQ-R (Landrum et al., 2000) items, and followed by items regarding disability and sexual orientation issues. The tables present the average response rating given by 2001 and 2004 participants per item, the standard deviation, and the statistical significance<sup>6</sup> of the differences between the groups per item. As usual, the items are presented in the order of ascending *p*-values; that is, items to which 2001 and 2004 participants responded most differently are listed first, and items to which their responses were essentially the same are listed last.

In regards to the ‘original’ CDQ-R items (Table 17), participants from the 2001 and the 2004 assessment responded observably different to 13 of the 23 items. In all 13 cases, 2004 participants expressed a more positive attitude towards diversity issues than 2001 participants. The 13 items to which 2001 and 2004 participants responded observably differently focused both on the inherent value of diversity and the adequacy of this campus in regards to diversity issues. In terms of the inherent value of diversity, 2004 participants endorsed more strongly than 2001 participants that diversity enriches the educational experience, strengthens communities and the workplace, enhances America's economic competitiveness, and that diversity on campus improves the quality of their education. They also disagreed more strongly with statements that denied the value of diversity in terms of education or in terms of personal growth and a healthy society.

In regards to the adequacy of this campus regarding diversity issues, 2004 participants agreed more readily than 2001 participants that the campus environment is free from racial conflict and promotes diversity, and that the faculty, staff and administration are sensitive to diversity issues, and exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus. They were also more likely to believe that the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one, and were generally speaking more satisfied with their educational institution than the 2001 participants. Furthermore, 2004 participants more commonly disagreed with the statement that “minorities feel uncomfortable at this university” than 2001 participants.

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Statistical significance’ of the group differences is denoted by a *p*-value of less than 0.05. Also note, however, that in the case of many comparisons, such as in this case, a more stringent interpretation of the *p*-value is oftentimes used, as the likelihood of chance differences increases with the number of comparisons performed.

Tables 18 and 19 summarize the participants' responses to the added items, focusing on disability and sexual orientation issues, respectively. Observable differences were noted on 2 of the 6 items regarding disability issues, and 2 of the 5 items regarding sexual orientation issues. Again, all four differences reflected a more positive view of diversity issues of the 2004 participants than the 2001 participants. Regarding disability issues, 2004 participants were more likely to agree that they felt comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with disabilities than 2001 participants. They also disagreed more strongly that they had encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities on this campus.

Regarding sexual orientation issues, 2004 participants agreed more strongly that they felt comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend, and that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.

Table 17. URI student responses to CDQ-R items, 2001 vs. 2004

‘Original’ CDQ-R Items		URI 2001 ( <i>n</i> = 148)		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 515)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
1.	The campus environment is free from racial conflict.	2.91	1.02	3.29	1.00	<.000
20.	Diversity enriches the educational experience.	3.86	0.85	4.18	0.72	<.000
22.	Diversity strengthens communities and the workplace.	3.99	0.56	4.26	0.66	<.000
3.	This university actively promotes diversity.	3.51	1.01	3.81	0.91	0.001
19.	The faculty at this institution is sensitive to diversity issues.	3.43	0.93	3.67	0.78	0.002
9.	Taking classes that emphasize multicultural diversity would not enhance my education.	2.34	0.91	2.09	0.95	0.005
7.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus.	3.56	0.81	3.76	0.87	0.014
17.	Diversity on campus improves the quality of my education.	3.73	0.84	3.91	0.85	0.021
18.	I am satisfied with my educational institution.	3.68	0.93	3.87	0.88	0.021
21.	Diversity does not promote personal growth and a healthy society.	1.93	0.75	1.77	0.77	0.026
23.	Diversity enhances America's economic competitiveness.	3.80	0.75	3.97	0.82	0.027
4.	As far as I know, minorities feel uncomfortable at this university.	2.68	0.92	2.50	0.96	0.047
6.	In general, the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one.	3.68	0.83	3.82	0.77	0.049
16.	Where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom.	3.41	0.86	3.54	0.88	0.123
13.	This university does not provide a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity.	2.86	0.94	2.77	0.94	0.255
15.	Hiring practices at this university do not indicate that racial/ethnic barriers are gradually eroding.	3.19	0.70	3.11	0.74	0.274
8.	I am aware of the content of my university's diversity plan.	2.95	0.97	2.85	1.11	0.293
14.	I feel comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition of those who attend.	3.71	0.93	3.79	1.07	0.395
5.	My education on this campus has not included exposure to the history and culture of minority groups.	2.76	1.06	2.70	1.14	0.573
2.	Friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race.	3.76	0.86	3.79	0.95	0.741
11.	I have encountered racial discrimination on this campus.	2.39	1.10	2.36	1.24	0.805
12.	I think that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity.	3.48	0.93	3.50	1.07	0.835
10.	Recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority.	3.30	0.79	3.31	0.94	0.863

Table 18. URI student responses to items regarding disability issues, 2001 vs. 2004.

Items regarding Disability Issues		URI 2001 ( <i>n</i> = 148)		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 515)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
25.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with disabilities.	4.11	0.64	4.33	0.66	<.000
28.	I have encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities on this campus.	2.41	0.94	2.18	0.96	0.012
26.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.65	0.76	3.75	0.82	0.183
27.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.56	0.96	3.50	0.84	0.476
24.	In general, buildings on this campus are accessible to individuals with disabilities.	3.30	1.05	3.25	1.02	0.654
29.	As far as I know, persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university.	3.51	0.77	3.49	0.74	0.825

Table 19. URI student responses to items regarding sexual orientation issues, 2001 vs. 2004.

Items regarding Sexual Orientation Issues		URI 2001 ( <i>n</i> = 148)		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 515)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
30.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend.	3.97	0.71	4.23	0.72	<.000
31.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.32	0.77	3.60	0.77	<.000
34.	As far as I know, persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation feel comfortable at this university.	3.26	0.84	3.37	0.77	0.146
32.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.07	0.92	3.16	0.90	0.302
33.	I have encountered discrimination against persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation on this campus.	2.66	1.09	2.69	1.14	0.824

## 4.2. Minority Student Comparisons

The racial composition of the samples of 2001 and 2004, summarized in Table 20, was quite different. In both cases, minority students were intentionally over-sampled. In 2004, this over-sampling was conducted with greater success (compare the 2001 minority recruitment rate of 27.7% to the 2004 minority recruitment rate of 41.7%), resulting in a more diverse sample.

*Table 20.* Participants' racial background by year of assessment.

Racial Background	Year of Assessment			
	2001		2004	
	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0.0	3	0.6
Black/African American	12	8.1	56	10.9
Hispanic/Latino	15	10.1	69	13.5
White/Caucasian	107	72.3	299	58.3
Asian American/Pacific Islander	8	5.4	51	9.9
Other	4	2.7	35 <sup>7</sup>	6.8
<i>Total</i>	148	100.0	513	100.0

In both 2001 and 2004 it was found that there were substantial differences in the attitudes between minority and majority students regarding diversity issues. Thus, the differences presented in section 3.1 may reflect racial differences in opinions as much as temporal differences between 2001 and 2004 attitudes, as the racial composition was much different between the two samples. In order to present an unbiased comparison between 2001 and 2004 participant responses, this section presents a summary of the minority student responses to the diversity items. (See section 4.3. for a summary of the majority student responses.)

As in the previous sections, responses to the 'original' CDQ-R items are given first, and are presented in Table 21. Of the 23 'original' CDQ-R items, minority students of the 2001 and the 2004 assessment expressed observably different responses to 4 items. In all 4 cases, 2004 minority participants expressed a more positive attitude towards diversity issues. Specifically, they expressed a greater appreciation of the inherent value of diversity (i.e., that diversity enriches the educational experience and that it strengthens communities and the workplace) and were more satisfied with the adequacy of this campus in regards to diversity issues (i.e., that the campus environment is free from racial conflict, and that this university actively promotes diversity) than 2001 participants.

<sup>7</sup> Of these, 9 participants described themselves as Cape Verdean, 4 as African American / White, 2 as Caucasian/Hispanic, 1 as Native American/Black, 3 as unspecified bi/multi-racial, 1 each as American, Celtic, Greek Orthodox, Haitian, Indian, Italian, Jamaican, Jewish, Spanish, and 'Human', and 6 did not want to specify.

The responses of minority participants to the added items regarding disability and sexual orientation issues are summarized in Tables 22 and 23. Minority participants of 2001 and 2004 had observably different responses to 1 of the 6 disability related items, and 2 of the 5 sexual orientation related items. Again, in all 3 cases, 2004 minority participants expressed more positive views. Specifically, 2004 minority participants agreed more strongly than 2001 minority participants that they felt comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with and regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend. They also believed more strongly that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.



Table 21. URI student responses to CDQ-R items, 2001 vs. 2004, minority students only.

‘Original’ CDQ-R Items		URI 2001 ( <i>n</i> = 41)		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 214)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
20.	Diversity enriches the educational experience.	3.78	0.94	4.23	0.68	0.000
1.	The campus environment is free from racial conflict.	2.49	1.05	3.05	1.07	0.002
3.	This university actively promotes diversity.	3.05	1.07	3.57	1.00	0.003
22.	Diversity strengthens communities and the workplace.	3.98	0.47	4.30	0.70	0.005
13.	This university does not provide a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity.	3.32	0.99	3.01	1.02	0.081
6.	In general, the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one.	3.34	1.11	3.60	0.88	0.097
8.	I am aware of the content of my university's diversity plan.	3.07	0.91	2.79	1.09	0.119
17.	Diversity on campus improves the quality of my education.	3.73	0.92	3.96	0.88	0.137
21.	Diversity does not promote personal growth and a healthy society.	2.00	0.67	1.82	0.84	0.191
4.	As far as I know, minorities feel uncomfortable at this university.	2.93	1.06	2.72	1.10	0.265
9.	Taking classes that emphasize multicultural diversity would not enhance my education.	2.34	0.88	2.16	0.99	0.285
14.	I feel comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition of those who attend.	3.37	1.18	3.57	1.17	0.318
2.	Friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race.	3.46	1.00	3.63	1.01	0.332
23.	Diversity enhances America's economic competitiveness.	3.95	0.71	4.08	0.83	0.337
7.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus.	3.32	0.88	3.47	0.94	0.346
18.	I am satisfied with my educational institution.	3.51	1.17	3.65	1.00	0.450
15.	Hiring practices at this university do not indicate that racial/ethnic barriers are gradually eroding.	3.20	0.81	3.11	0.68	0.465
16.	Where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom.	3.17	0.83	3.29	0.94	0.470
11.	I have encountered racial discrimination on this campus.	2.85	1.24	2.70	1.33	0.484
5.	My education on this campus has not included exposure to the history and culture of minority groups.	2.93	1.19	2.80	1.13	0.528
19.	The faculty at this institution is sensitive to diversity issues.	3.34	0.91	3.40	0.90	0.716
10.	Recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority.	3.32	0.88	3.38	1.01	0.730
12.	I think that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity.	3.85	0.76	3.84	0.94	0.936

Table 22. URI student responses to items regarding disability issues, 2001 vs. 2004, minority students only.

Items regarding Disability Issues		URI 2001 ( <i>n</i> = 41)		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 214)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
25.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with disabilities.	3.95	0.80	4.32	0.71	0.003
28.	I have encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities on this campus.	2.37	0.86	2.21	0.97	0.341
26.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.44	0.78	3.56	0.86	0.402
29.	As far as I know, persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university.	3.44	0.81	3.34	0.78	0.444
27.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.44	0.98	3.38	0.89	0.696
24.	In general, buildings on this campus are accessible to individuals with disabilities.	3.27	1.14	3.21	1.05	0.770

Table 23. URI student responses to items regarding sexual orientation issues, 2001 vs. 2004, minority students only.

Items regarding Sexual Orientation Issues		URI 2001 ( <i>n</i> = 41)		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 214)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
30.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend.	3.71	0.93	4.18	0.76	0.001
31.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.17	0.86	3.46	0.74	0.028
33.	I have encountered discrimination against persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation on this campus.	2.93	1.03	2.59	1.08	0.065
34.	As far as I know, persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation feel comfortable at this university.	3.07	0.88	3.23	0.80	0.248
32.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	2.98	0.94	3.15	0.89	0.256

### 4.3. Majority Student Comparisons

In section 4.2., the responses of minority participants of 2001 and 2004 were summarized. This section provides an overview of the responses of the majority participants of the 2001 and 2004 samples.

As in the previous sections, responses to the ‘original’ CDQ-R items are given first, and are presented in Table 24. Of the 23 ‘original’ CDQ-R items, majority students of the 2001 and the 2004 assessment expressed observably different responses to 12 items. By comparison, the number of different attitudes observed among minority students occurred only in regards to 4 of these items (see section 4.2.) This difference suggests that changes in students’ attitudes towards diversity from 2001 to 2004 were more pronounced among majority students than among minority students.

Among minority students it was found that the 2004 participants expressed a greater appreciation of the inherent value of diversity and were more satisfied with the adequacy of this campus in regards to diversity issues than 2001 participants. The same trend was observed among majority students, to an even greater extent. Majority students of 2004 expressed a more positive view of the campus climate towards diversity (e.g., were more likely to agree that the campus environment is free from racial conflict, and that faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus) than the majority students of 2001, and indicated a stronger appreciation of the value of diversity, including its educational value. Additionally, majority students of 2004 noted the university’s promotion of diversity more commonly than the 2001 majority students, and indicated a greater satisfaction with the university.

The responses of majority participants to the added items regarding disability and sexual orientation issues are summarized in Tables 25 and 26. In regards to the disability related items, 2004 majority students expressed greater comfort in attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with disabilities than 2001 majority students, just like the 2004 minority students expressed more comfort than the 2001 minority students. Additionally, the 2004 majority students also indicated more strongly than 2001 majority students that they had not encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities on this campus.

In regards to the sexual orientation items, the same differences between 2001 and 2004 participants emerged among majority students as among minority students. That is, 2004 majority participants agreed more strongly than 2001 minority participants that they felt comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with and regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend. They also believed more strongly that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.

Table 24. URI student responses to CDQ-R items, 2001 vs. 2004, majority students only.

Original CDQ-R Items		URI 2001 ( <i>n</i> = 107)		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 299)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
1.	The campus environment is free from racial conflict.	3.070	0.960	3.470	0.910	<.000
7.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus.	3.650	0.770	3.980	0.730	<.000
19.	The faculty at this institution is sensitive to diversity issues.	3.470	0.930	3.880	0.590	<.000
18.	I am satisfied with my educational institution.	3.740	0.820	4.040	0.730	0.001
22.	Diversity strengthens communities and the workplace.	3.990	0.590	4.220	0.620	0.001
3.	This university actively promotes diversity.	3.690	0.940	3.980	0.790	0.002
9.	Taking classes that emphasize multicultural diversity would not enhance my education.	2.340	0.920	2.040	0.930	0.005
20.	Diversity enriches the educational experience.	3.900	0.810	4.140	0.740	0.005
4.	As far as I know, minorities feel uncomfortable at this university.	2.580	0.850	2.340	0.820	0.010
16.	Where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom.	3.500	0.850	3.730	0.770	0.012
6.	In general, the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one.	3.800	0.650	3.970	0.630	0.021
21.	Diversity does not promote personal growth and a healthy society.	1.910	0.780	1.740	0.720	0.048
17.	Diversity on campus improves the quality of my education.	3.730	0.810	3.890	0.820	0.088
23.	Diversity enhances America's economic competitiveness.	3.750	0.770	3.890	0.800	0.112
13.	This university does not provide a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity.	2.690	0.860	2.580	0.830	0.234
14.	I feel comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition of those who attend.	3.840	0.790	3.960	0.970	0.268
15.	Hiring practices at this university do not indicate that racial/ethnic barriers are gradually eroding.	3.190	0.660	3.120	0.780	0.432
11.	I have encountered racial discrimination on this campus.	2.210	0.990	2.120	1.120	0.469
12.	I think that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity.	3.340	0.950	3.250	1.100	0.481
5.	My education on this campus has not included exposure to the history and culture of minority groups.	2.700	1.000	2.620	1.140	0.539
2.	Friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race.	3.880	0.770	3.920	0.880	0.668
10.	Recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority.	3.290	0.750	3.260	0.880	0.743
8.	I am aware of the content of my university's diversity plan.	2.910	1.000	2.900	1.120	0.934

Table 25. URI student responses to items regarding disability issues, 2001 vs. 2004, majority students only.

Items regarding Disability Issues		URI 2001 ( <i>n</i> = 107)		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 299)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
25.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity together with persons with disabilities.	4.17	0.56	4.34	0.62	0.011
28.	I have encountered discrimination against persons with disabilities on this campus.	2.42	0.97	2.16	0.96	0.017
26.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.73	0.75	3.89	0.77	0.068
29.	As far as I know, persons with disabilities feel comfortable at this university.	3.53	0.76	3.60	0.70	0.390
24.	In general, buildings on this campus are accessible to individuals with disabilities.	3.31	1.02	3.28	1.00	0.809
27.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the disabled population on campus.	3.61	0.95	3.60	0.79	0.926

Table 26. URI student responses to items regarding sexual orientation issues, 2001 vs. 2004, majority students only.

Items regarding Sexual Orientation Issues		URI 2001 ( <i>n</i> = 107)		URI 2004 ( <i>n</i> = 299)		Sig.
No.	Statement	mean	SD	mean	SD	<i>p</i>
31.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.37	0.73	3.70	0.78	<.000
30.	I feel comfortable attending classes and any other campus activity regardless of the sexual orientation of those who attend.	4.07	0.59	4.28	0.68	0.005
34.	As far as I know, persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation feel comfortable at this university.	3.34	0.82	3.47	0.74	0.118
33.	I have encountered discrimination against persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation on this campus.	2.56	1.09	2.75	1.17	0.147
32.	I believe that the students exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the needs of persons of a gay/lesbian or bisexual/transgender sexual orientation.	3.11	0.91	3.17	0.91	0.547

## **5. Comparing the Diversity Climate 2004 Data to a Larger Sample**

In 2001, an effort was made to compare the URI student responses to the Diversity Climate Assessment to the responses of a broader sample. The idea was to gain some insight into how URI compared to other institutions regarding diversity issues and their perception. The logical choice for a comparative sample was the sample obtained by Landrum, Dillinger and Vandernoot (2000) as it was this study that the original URI Diversity Climate Assessment was modeled after. Furthermore, the Landrum et al. (2000) study had at least two highly desirable qualities. First, as mentioned in sections 1.1 and 1.3, the Landrum et al. (2000) study provided data of a large and nationally representative sample. Specifically, Landrum et al. had contacted all 53 member schools of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, of which URI is a member, to recruit them for participation. The 11 universities that agreed to participate were (in alphabetical order) Boise State University, San Jose State University, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, University of Louisville, University of South Florida, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, University of Texas at San Antonio, Virginia Commonwealth University, Washburn University, Washington State University, and Wichita State University. These 11 universities are comparable to the University of Rhode Island, and thus provided a good comparison group. Second, the data collected by Landrum et al. (2000) were contemporary with the URI 2001 data. Consequently, in order to gain insight into how URI compared to other institutions regarding diversity issues, the comparison between the URI 2001 data and the Landrum et al. data was an apt comparison.

Unfortunately, since the publication of the Landrum et al. (2000) study, no further research has been conducted using the Campus Diversity Questionnaire – Revised (CDQ-R), excepting research at the University of Rhode Island. Thus, for the present report, there is no contemporary comparison sample available to compare the 2004 Diversity Climate Assessment data to.

To give at least a glimpse of how the 2004 student attitudes and experiences in regards to diversity issues compare to those of students from different universities, a rough comparison of the URI 2004 data and the Landrum et al. 2000 data is provided in Table 27. The comparison is, of course, limited by the fact that the Landrum et al. data reflects attitudes that are much older than the URI 2004 data. In all likelihood, attitudes towards diversity have changed considerably during the last four years on a national level, and thus contemporary national data would look quite different from the data provided in the Landrum et al. study. Numerous universities have implemented strategies for years to actively change students' opinions about diversity. Such strategies usually focus on raising awareness, improving sensitivity towards differing cultures, and/or enhancing intercultural communications (Carrell, 1997), all of which would be reflected in students' responses

to the CDQ-R statements.

In Table 27 the responses of the URI 2004 sample and the sample collected by Landrum et al (2000) are summarized. The responses are presented in the same way in which the data was originally reported by Landrum et al.. That is, Table 27 gives the percentage of respondents who agreed with a given statement. The original response scale of the CDQ-R allows the respondent to answer through the use of 5 possible responses. For the Table 27, these five possible responses were collapsed into two groups, agreement (i.e., denoted by the response “agree” or “strongly agree”), and lack of agreement (i.e., denoted by the response “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, or “neutral/uncertain”).

Table 27 lists the 23 CDQ-R items in the order of greatest differences between the URI 2004 responses and the Landrum et al. 2000 responses. As explained in section 1.3, 6 of the 23 items were reverse-worded (e.g., by adding the word “not” to the statement) for the URI Diversity Climate Assessments, as indicated by the use of [ ] in Table 27. For Table 27 the responses of the URI sample to these six items were reverse-coded to reflect a similar meaning as the original CDQ-R items. The agreement rates arrived at in this way are listed at the end of Table 27 alongside the agreement rates of the national 2000 sample. As agreeing to one thing, however, is not the same as disagreeing with its opposite, the comparison of these items is not entirely suitable, and the interpretation of the differences between the reverse-coded URI responses and the national responses should be done cautiously.

In Table 27 it can be seen that the URI 2004 respondents agreed more often to almost all of the CDQ-R statements than the respondents of the Landrum et al. (2000) study, thereby expressing a more positive attitude towards diversity issues. Considering that four years have passed since the Landrum study, this finding is not surprising, but it does remain promising in the sense that student attitudes towards diversity issue have changed noticeably and positively from 2000 to 2004. Most pronounced are the changing attitudes in regards to the educational value of diversity. The URI 2004 respondents agreed more commonly than the 2000 respondents of the national survey (Landrum et al., 2000) that diversity on campus improves the quality of education (76.8% URI 2004 agreement vs. 58.8% national 2000 agreement), the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity (60.6% vs. 46.9%), and that diversity enriches the educational experience (90.7% vs. 79.0%). The faculty’s sensitivity to diversity issues was also rated more favorably by the 2004 URI respondents, and the university’s promotion of diversity more widely acknowledged.

There were two exceptions to the rule that URI 2004 respondents agreed more commonly to CDQ-R items than national 2000 respondents. These exceptions were the responses to item 16 (5.9% difference) and item 2 (0.6% difference). Namely, a slightly greater percentage of the national

2000 respondents believed that where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom. A negligibly greater percentage of the national 2000 respondents expressed their belief that friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race.

Table 27. Agreement<sup>8</sup> to CDQ-R statements, URI 2004 vs. Landrum et al., 2000.

	CDQ-R Statements	URI 2004	Landrum et al., 2000	Difference
No.	Item	% Agreement		
17.	Diversity on campus improves the quality of my education.	76.9	58.8	18.1
19.	The faculty at this institution is sensitive to diversity issues.	66.6	50.6	16.0
12.	I think that the core curriculum should require courses in multicultural diversity.	60.6	46.9	13.7
3.	This university actively promotes diversity.	70.7	57.5	13.2
8.	I am aware of the content of my university's diversity plan.	34.2	21.9	12.3
20.	Diversity enriches the educational experience.	90.7	79.0	11.7
10.	Recruitment of minority students is an institutional priority.	42.7	31.7	11.0
22.	Diversity strengthens communities and the workplace.	92.2	82.4	9.8
7.	I believe that the faculty, staff and administration exhibit sufficient sensitivity to the multicultural needs of the campus.	71.1	61.8	9.3
1.	The campus environment is free from racial conflict.	49.3	40.6	8.7
14.	I feel comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition of those who attend.	72	64.5	7.5
6.	In general, the relationship between minority and majority students is a friendly one.	76.1	70.1	6.0
16.	Where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom.	61.6	67.5	-5.9
18.	I am satisfied with my educational institution.	78.1	74.1	4.0
23.	Diversity enhances America's economic competitiveness.	74.4	70.8	3.6
11.	I have encountered racial discrimination on this campus.	24.3	21.9	2.4
2.	Friendships are more likely to be determined by common interests than by race.	72.2	72.8	-0.6
<i>Reverse coded items<sup>9</sup> – direct comparison not applicable</i>				
15	Hiring practices at this university do [not] indicate that racial/ethnic barriers are gradually eroding.	15.7	29.5	13.8
13	This university does [not] provide a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity.	40.6	27.2	13.4
9	Taking classes that emphasize multicultural diversity would [not] enhance my education.	75.7	67.5	8.2
4	As far as I know, minorities feel [un]comfortable at this university.	54.2	61.7	7.5
5	My education on this campus has [not] included exposure to the history and culture of minority groups.	52.0	57.2	5.2
21	Diversity does [not] promote personal growth and a healthy society.	87.8	83.6	4.2

<sup>8</sup> "Agreement" includes the responses "strongly agree" and "agree".

<sup>9</sup> For the URI Diversity Climate Assessment, the wording of these items was reversed by adding the word "not" or using "un-", as marked by the [ ]; the responses were reverse coded to approximately reflect the original meaning of the Landrum et al. items



## 6. Qualitative Data

### 6.1. Perceived Advantages of Diversity

Up to this point, the discussion of the Diversity Climate Assessment 2004 data has focused solely on the quantitatively collected data. In addition to the 43 multiple-choice items, however, respondents were also asked two open-ended questions. These two open-ended items focused on the participants' perceived benefits or advantages of diversity, and their perceived drawbacks or disadvantages of diversity. This section addresses the respondents' answers regarding the perceived benefits and advantages of diversity.

The responses given to the statement "What are the benefits or advantages (if any) to diversity?" by the 512 participants varied considerably in length, content, and style. In order to provide an overview of the kinds of responses participants gave, an effort was made to group similar statements into thematic categories. These thematic categories were arrived at by reviewing each response, giving it a thematic label, and moving on to the next response, until common themes emerged, and similar responses could be labeled with the same thematic label. This categorization effort resulted in 7 broad categories, and 14 somewhat narrower themes. Of the 7 categories, only 6 describe underlying themes; the last category (6.2%) was reserved for responses that defied grouping.

The relationship between the broad and the narrow categories is outlined in Table 28. This table lists each narrow category per broad category, and provides 3 sample statements that exemplify the type of response classified under this thematic label. Table 28 also lists the percentage of participants who gave a particular type of response, so that it could be determined which themes were predominant and which themes were less common.

In Table 28 it can be seen that the most commonly cited benefit of diversity was its educational and well-rounding effect (25.4%). This effect was described in terms of diversity's educational benefit in learning about different cultures and traditions (15.0%), its effect on raising awareness and sensitivity towards individuals and groups of people (5.4%), and the gain in life experience (5.0%). The second most commonly cited benefit of diversity pertained to the maturational growth of the self and society that diversity may bring about (24.1%). This theme of growth was expressed in both the specific gain of open-mindedness and the broadening of one's horizon (19.8%), and the more ambiguously implied personal and societal growth (4.3%).

Another important theme of benefits addressed by the 2004 respondents was the role of diversity in assuaging differences (18.1%). This theme was expressed in four different ways: (1) directly, in terms of overcoming differences (8.7%), and more indirectly through (2) enhancing

understanding of differences and different people (4.7%), (3) increasing personal and societal tolerance (3.5%), and through diversity's effect on improving social justice and fairness (1.2%). The 2004 participants also expressed their appreciation for diversity in being able to meet a greater variety of people, which fosters stronger, more inclusive communities (10.9%), and preparing them for "the real world" (8.0%). A small percentage of responses did not see any benefit in diversity or were unable to name one (7.4%).

*Table 28.* Summary of the responses to the open-ended question: Benefits of diversity.

Category		Theme		Sample Statements
Name	%	Name	%	
More Educated, Well-rounded	25.4	Educational Benefit	15.0	“Getting to know and learn about different cultures. Let you be more knowledgeable.“
				“Better educated people know about diversity”
		Raised Awareness, Sensitivity	5.4	“Greater enhanced education and values for which education is based on.”
				“Opens awareness to people who are around, and opens us up to people with different backgrounds.”
				“Feel for other cultures.”
				“It gives people awareness of other people and how they're raised.”
Increased Exposure, Experience	5.0	“[Diversity] gives people more experiences outside of their lifestyle-experience different things they might not experience.“		
		“An advantage to diversity is letting people be around others they usually wouldn't be around.“		
		“Offers individuals a chance to encounter different cultures.“		
Growth of Self & Society	24.1	Broadened Horizons, Open-mindedness	19.8	“Gives opportunities to see new things, keep from living sheltered.”
				"I think it keeps people from having a narrow outlook on the world around them."
				“Get to know other cultures which makes you a better problem solver. “
		Personal and Societal Growth	4.3	"Ethnic enrichment to society and development of student characters."
				"Meeting new people and learning about different backgrounds helps you grow as a person."
		"[Diversity] helps us grow as a country."		
Assuaging Differences	18.1	Overcoming differences	8.7	"People stop fighting"
				"Breaks the ice."

Category		Theme		Sample Statements
<i>Name</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>%</i>	
		Enhanced Understanding	4.7	"[Diversity] solves ignorance within communities, workplace, school."
				"[Diversity] allows you to see life through many different perspectives. Enhances understanding of other people in general."
				"Better understanding of society, other cultures."
				"[Diversity] opens you to other cultures and other people's thoughts and the way they think and live."
		Increased Tolerance	3.5	"Learn [about] other cultures and teaches tolerance."
				"[Diversity] increases tolerance of other cultures."
				"Diversity at university is teaching tolerance."
				"Should be encouraged. Promotes economic equality."
		Social Justice, Fairness	1.2	"Diversity creates fairness to everyone."
				"[Diversity] promotes equality for everyone, better society."
Social Benefit, More Inclusive	10.9	Social Benefit, More Inclusive	10.9	"Get to know more people."
				"Meet different kinds of people that you wouldn't normally meet."
				"Helps integrate people. Mix them together."
Preparation for 'Real World'	8.0	Preparation for 'Real World'	8.0	"Having a diverse school environment prepares students for the real world."
				"Get to have a sense of the real world. Get to know different backgrounds and cultures."
				"Work well with many groups of people that you may have no control over working with them in the future."
None, do not know	7.4	None, do not know	7.4	"Don't know, have no clue"
				"I don't know - none."
				"can't think of any"
Miscellaneous	6.2	Miscellaneous URI Programming Issues	4.5	"Intrinsically valuable, own value."
				"benefits are important"
			1.7	"That was stated in the questions you just asked me."
				"Its good how the diversity at our school is."
				"There is the Multi-Cultural Center on campus."
				"More activities should be available about diversity."

After the responses were grouped into categories of thematic themes, the expressions of benefits of diversity were checked for differences according to race, class standing, gender, and religion. The only difference that emerged was in regards to the respondents' race. The frequency with which majority and minority students named a type of benefit of diversity is displayed in Table 29. The differences between majority and minority students were negligible in regards to the two most commonly cited benefits of diversity, namely, its education and well-rounding effect, and its effect on the maturational growth of the self and society. The difference only emerged in regards to the less commonly cited benefits. Specifically, majority students felt more often than minority students that diversity helps to assuage differences (20.7% vs. 14.5) and that the exposure to diversity better prepares them for the 'real world' (11.7% vs. 2.8%). Minority students felt more often that diversity brings about more inclusive communities, or could not name a benefit of diversity.

*Table 29. Racial differences in expressing benefits of diversity.*

Perceived Benefit	Majority		Minority	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
More educated, well-rounded	75	25.1	55	25.7
Growth of self and society	72	24.1	51	23.8
Assuaging differences	62	20.7	31	14.5
Preparation for real world	35	11.7	6	2.8
Social benefit, more inclusive	25	8.4	31	14.5
None, do not know	16	5.4	22	10.3
Miscellaneous	14	4.7	18	8.4
Total	299	100	214	100

*Note: Racial difference is statistically significant at  $\chi^2(6) = 26.2$  with  $p < 0.001$*

## 6.2. Perceived Disadvantages of Diversity

The responses given to the statement "What are the drawbacks or disadvantages (if any) to diversity?" by the 512 participants are summarized in Table 30. Again, an effort was made to group similar statements into thematic categories. These thematic categories were arrived at by reviewing each response, giving it a thematic label, and moving on to the next response, until common themes emerged, and similar responses could be labeled with the same thematic label. For the disadvantages of diversity, this categorization effort resulted in 4 broad categories, and 22 themes. Table 30 gives sample statements for each of the 22 themes<sup>10</sup> grouped by their respective category.

<sup>10</sup> Generally, 3 sample statements per theme are given, unless less than 5% of the 512 responses fell into a certain category, in which case only 2 sample statements are given per theme.

As can be seen in Table 30, the most common response to the question “What are the drawbacks or disadvantages (if any) to diversity?” was by far “none” (45.4%). Thus, almost half of the respondents did not believe that there are any disadvantages to diversity. An additional 4.3% declared that they were not sure if there were disadvantages, and 2.1% did not want to answer the question. All of these responses were grouped into the biggest category, labeled “other”, together with the items defying categorization, labeled “miscellaneous”.

The second most common category consisted of the responses indicating perceived negative consequences of diversity (20.6%). The named negative consequences, in order of frequency, were the increased potential for conflict and tension (8.3%) brought about by diversity, the discomfort experienced by some (5.6%) due to diversity, the rifts and barriers diversity may create between people (2.9%), intimidation experienced by some in the face of diversity (1.6%), communication difficulties that may arise (1.2%), and the highlighting of differences that may occur through diversity (1.0%).

About one fifth of the respondents identified the following negative associations of diversity when asked about the disadvantages of diversity: discrimination (4.1%), ignorant people (4.1%), reverse discrimination as it pertains, for example, to affirmative action (3.5%), racism and racial tension (2.7%), stereotyping (1.4%), inequality (1.2%), prejudice (1.2%), and extremes of diversity (0.8%).

A negligible portion of the respondents commented upon the implementation of increasing diversity by either labeling efforts as too much (1.4%), too limited (0.8%), or difficult in an education setting (0.4%), or by making comments about URI’s approach directly (1.0%).

There were no differences according to gender, race, or class standing in the frequency with which responses fell into the four categories. Furthermore, there were no differences according to gender, race, or class standing in the frequency with which respondents indicated that there are no disadvantages of diversity.

Table 30. Summary of the responses to the open-ended question: Disadvantages of diversity.

Category	%	Theme	%	Sample Statements
Negative Consequences	20.6	Increased Potential for Conflict, Tension	8.3	"Issues will be brought up. People closed-minded will be offended. Same-sex marriage for example."
				"Doesn't work all the time. Creates conflicts when people are closed-minded and don't want to know about other cultures."
				"Conflicts that may come from differences in traditions."
		Discomfort	5.6	"It can make some people uncomfortable."
				"Some people aren't ready for the reality of diversity. It can be discouraging to people who aren't open to it."
				"Culture Shock."
		Creates and/or Increases Rifts and Barriers	2.9	"Creates groups, everyone sticks to their own."
				"People of the same race or sexual orientation may group together and isolate themselves."
		Intimidation	1.6	"Some people are threatened."
				"Fear of people who are different."
Negative Associations	18.8	Communication Difficulties	1.2	"Lines of communication are more difficult."
				"If any, I would think a language barrier."
		Highlights Differences	1.0	"Points out differences."
				"Getting along with differences."
		Discrimination	4.1	"Increases the chances of discrimination."
				"People discriminate and are racist and that is a problem."
		Ignorant People	4.1	"Some people aren't interested and get angry that their time is being wasted. Their minds are closed."
				"You could meet ignorant people and people who are not willing to be open minded."
		Reverse Discrimination, Affirmative Action	3.5	"Singling-out or excluding people based on race rather than their qualifications (i.e. affirmative action)."
				"A lot of reverse discrimination you end up hurting the overall gain like with affirmative action and sometimes someone may get something they don't deserve because of their race."
		Racism and Racial Tension	2.7	"I don't see any at all, except for racial tension in the group."
				"Racism [is a] big problem with diversity."
		Stereotyping	1.4	"People who portray poorly on their group."

Category	%	Theme	%	Sample Statements
		Inequality	1.2	"Stereotypes, minorities automatically assuming the majority is prejudiced."
				"People don't feel they're equal. Not same opportunities, outcasts."
				"There is not enough equality."
		Prejudice	1.2	"There are only drawbacks to prejudice which comes in to play whenever diversity is involved but I do think diversity is a good thing."
				"Prejudices - cliques."
		Extremes	0.8	"Does not feel there are any unless you go to extremes."
				"Extremists (skinheads for example)."
		Too much	1.4	"Imposing diversity onto people who don't want it. Sometimes [it] is not natural." "People get too concerned about diversity and they shove it down your throat."
Implementation	3.5	URI Programming Issues	1.0	"Need more diversity events." "Unnecessary events that lose money because of uninterest."
		Too limited	0.8	"Only limited exposure to new cultures." "Focus too much on minorities."
				"I do not think there are any unless people are offended by my suggestion to add it to the curriculum."
		Educational	0.4	"I don't think there are any - could be a problem with people of dominant class may incite conflict if diversity was more incorporated into education."
Other	57.1	None	45.4	"I don't think there are any. You can only benefit from diversity."
				"There are none."
				"Not that I can think of."
		Miscellaneous	5.2	"Good and bad in every race. Too many ideas. Not a lot of problems, really."
				"Hard to deal with people who resist diversity."
				"It it's not interesting, you don't learn anything."
		Don't know	4.3	"Don't know."
				"Not sure."
		No Comment	2.1	"Refuse to answer."
				"Pass - don't want to answer."

## 7. References

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