

**Out of the Box Snapshot**

**An Analysis of the Social Climate at Purdue University and its Effects on the Minority Experience**

**Student researcher: Maya M. Black, Sophomore**

My research is looking at the effects of Purdue’s social climate on the underrepresented minority (URM) student experience. Per Purdue’s classification, URM includes African American, Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native students. Typically, Hispanic and Latinx students are also included. I wanted to look at this topic as there is a disparity among the racial groups on campus, and there have been several race-related issues on campus with minimal response from Purdue Administration and students. My overall goal is to see if there is a disparity between White and URM students in retention rate, graduation rate, GPA, and campus engagement. My first research questions have included the following: Is there a disparity in perception of social climate between URM and White students? Do URM students feel isolated, excluded, or disenfranchised on campus? Does this exclusion, isolation, or disenfranchisement impact student success?

So far, I have found that there is a disparity between how URM and White students perceive Purdue’s social climate in its commitment to diversity and tolerance of diversity.

URM students do not feel like Purdue has a strong commitment to diversity or that diversity is tolerated here. There is also a disparity in how respected students of different races feel on campus, with White students feeling the most respected and Black students feeling the least respected. URM students also reported feeling disadvantaged in their studies due to their race. My next steps are to look at this information and compare it to more socially progressive or socially conservative universities than Purdue University in order to see if Purdue’s more conservative social climate is negatively impacting URM student success.

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*Research advisor Jason Ware writes: “The cornerstone of this project is the author’s investigation of the correlation between perceived social climate on campus and URM students’ retention rates, graduation rates, and campus engagement. Discovering disparities in perceptions about social climate between students and university administrators could inform effective initiatives to enhance URM student retention, graduation, and campus engagement. The author’s ability to navigate within and make sense of institutional data has made this preliminary study possible and will propel her forward as she continues this timely work.”*

	White	Black	Hispanic/LatinX
I have a deeper understanding of a topic due to a serious conversation with someone of a different race/ethnicity.	35.4%	64.5%	30.8%
Students are respected here regardless of race/ethnicity.	53.9%	23%	42%
Students of my race are respected here.	89.5%	30.7%	67.8%
I feel a greater commitment to my race due to experiences here.	40.3%	62.5%	72.2%

2013 SERU results. More personal questions judge how students internalize the feelings of campus social climate. These answers can be more indicative of how they perceive themselves and other racial groups on campus.